

## X Trades lead rally for Minnesota jobs

By Michael Kuchta

Union Advocate editor

**SAINT PAUL PARK** – More than 600 Building Trades members and their supporters rallied Oct. 9 against Marathon Ashland Petroleum, which is using an out-of-state contractor and out-of-state workers to conduct turnaround maintenance on its refinery here.

Marathon's use of Starcon Inc. is denying an estimated 60-80 jobs to Minnesota workers, and undercutting the wage and benefit standards that help Minnesota workers support their families, said Dick Anfang, president of the Minnesota Building and Construction Trades Council.

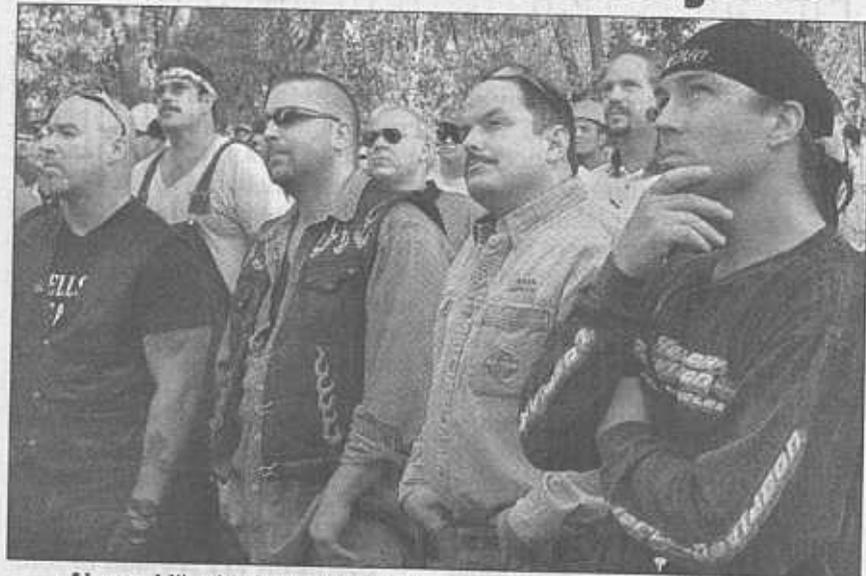
"They don't feel my 33 years of experience is good enough to work on the unit that I helped build," Murph McKenzie told the crowd, which packed into Veterans Memorial Park. McKenzie, a member of Pipefitters and Steamfitters Local 455, said he had worked on several refinery projects over the years, but currently is out of work.

**Workers kept apart.** Anfang said Starcon not only is using out-of-state workers, it has those workers under constant "supervision" to isolate them from union workers inside and outside the refinery.

"They've cordoned off the area where they work. They've established a separate gate," Anfang said. "They're herded on the bus together. They eat under supervision. They're at their hotel under supervision. They're denied their freedom of speech.

"All the signs indicate that this is a shadow workforce, a captive workforce, being victimized in the name of more corporate profits."

Teamsters Local 120 represents most of the refinery's workers, Anfang said, but union Building Trades workers routinely handle additional maintenance and spe-



**Above:** Mike McCoy (front) and Scot McNamara, both of Plumbers Local 34; Jim Mackey, of Laborers Local 132; and John Schmidt, of Carpenters Local 87, listen to speakers during the Oct. 9 rally.

**Right:** Congresswoman Betty McCollum urges union members to recognize they're "under attack every day." Union Advocate photos

cial projects. Marathon is using a loophole in the contract with the refinery's core contractor to bring in Starcon for the monthlong turnaround project, he said, and fabricating safety and productivity figures to justify it.

"They want a competitive advantage," he said of Marathon, "and they're doing it on the backs of Minnesota workers."

**How you vote matters.** A number of elected officials attended the rally in support; Congresswoman Betty McCollum, state Sen. Sharon Marko, and state Rep. Katie Sieben were among those who spoke.

Teamsters Joint Council 32 and the Lakes and Plains Regional Council of Carpenters both had their semi-trailers parked at the rally. At least two passing trains



blew whistles in support. Many in attendance parked blocks away in order to get to the rally, as cars, trucks and motorcycles jammed the town's old business district.

"This is not just happening here in Saint Paul Park," McCollum said of employer tactics to erode living standards. "You are under attack every day in Washington. It's happening throughout Minnesota. It's happening throughout the country."

McCollum urged the heavily union crowd to talk to co-workers and neighbors, and to make the connection between how they vote and their ability to maintain good jobs and benefits for their families and communities.